

Improving Personality-Mining Algorithms Used for Psychological Targeting with a Psychometric Scale for Susceptibility to Social Influence

This research shows that susceptibility to social influence as personality trait predicts consumer behavior in Online Social Networks (OSNs) such as Facebook. We suggest that a psychometric scale for susceptibility to social influence improves psychological targeting in OSNs.

Social influence drives the diffusion of content in OSNs. In order to leverage social influence in OSNs, users must be identified that are susceptible to social influence, e.g., regarding consumer decisions. In view of this, it surprises that psychological targeting in OSNs by means of personality mining does not consider susceptibility to social influence (Azucar, Marengo, & Settanni, 2018). In fact, present personality-mining algorithms focus on the Big Five personality traits, i.e. they identify digital footprints that correlate with personality traits such as extraversion or openness. Knowing which digital footprints are indicative for a certain personality trait is interesting as it helps to match ads to user personalities. Facebook's targeting option, for example, allows marketers to show a particular ad only to users with Facebook Likes that are indicative for extraversion (e.g., socializing; Matz, Kosinski, Nave, & Stillwell, 2017).

This research examines the relation between susceptibility to social influence as personality trait and behavior in OSNs. Data of an online survey reveals that an existing psychometric scale capturing susceptibility to social influence (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989) predicts diverse Facebook-liking behaviors. For marketers this is interesting as many of these behaviors are consumer related (e.g., view other Facebook users' posts on products, brands). Further, our data suggests that susceptibility of social influence is a more powerful predictor for OSN behavior than the Big Five. Overall, this research suggests that a psychometric scale for susceptibility to social influence improves personality-mining algorithms for psychological targeting in OSN and thus allows marketers to more effectively target customers in OSN.

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